



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Calumet City, IL

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected Calumet City for a Brownfields Pilot. Calumet City (population 40,220) is adjacent to the south side of Chicago. It shares the heavy-industry history of the surrounding region as well as the economic blight resulting from the loss of this industrial base. One hundred acres of this depressed area has been designated by the city as a Redevelopment Project Area (RPA). The city established the RPA to assist in the redevelopment of this blighted area and to promote higher and better land use through such tools as tax increment financing. Unemployment in the RPA is 18 percent, compared with a citywide average of 8 percent, and the percentage of households in the RPA living in poverty is 70 percent, compared with the citywide average of 9.8 percent. Within the RPA, suspected but undefined environmental contamination has hindered redevelopment attempts at several former industrial properties.

The Pilot will focus on a four-acre site within the RPA that has been proposed as the home of the fire station training center. The four-acre site is currently vacant, with dense vegetation. The property is located in a predominately mixed light industrial/heavy residential setting. A dry retention pond is immediately adjacent east of the subject site. A truck storage area is present west of the property. The area recently

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Calumet City, Illinois

Date of Award: September 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets a four-acre site in the city's Redevelopment Project Area.

Contacts:

Community and Economic
Development
(708) 891-8140

U.S. EPA – Region 5
(312) 886-3007

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

underwent a Phase I environmental site assessment, which indicated that some dumping may have occurred on the property. The Phase I assessment report recommended a subsurface investigation including soil and groundwater sampling and analysis to confirm the presence or absence of any environmental contamination. The Pilot will also focus on other priority brownfields within the RPA.

OBJECTIVES

Calumet City's long-range objective is to foster cleanup and redevelopment within the RPA. The Pilot plans to support this objective by conducting environmental assessments of targeted sites within the RPA and integrating the assessment results with redevelopment data to augment the existing RPA redevelopment plan. If the city can address health and safety concerns and regulatory constraints, it will consider step-wise development of specific brownfields—that is, immediate development of uncontaminated portions to create income that can be applied to cleanup and development of the remaining, contaminated portions.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot is:

- Planning environmental baseline screening assessments on targeted sites within the RPA;
- Planning to perform Phase II investigations on the four-acre site and other brownfields as deemed necessary; and
- Encouraging community involvement and environmental justice planning in Pilot activities through public meetings and information distribution.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Calumet City Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities, including the following:

- Cook County has provided the Pilot with a \$20,000 grant for a feasibility study for the targeted site.